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REFLECTIONS
ON THE
Life and Character of *CHRIST*,

BY
Law K
EDMUND Lord Bishop of CARLISLE,

WITH A
SUMMARY, AND APPENDIX
ON THE
GOSPEL MORALS

C A M B R I D G E,

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REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Life and Character of CHARLES

BY

EDWARD LORD BISHOP OF CARLISLE



SUMMARY APPENDIX

ON THE

GOSPEL MORALS

By A. M. R. D. G. E.
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TO HIS GRACE
AUGUSTUS HENRY
DUKE OF GRAFTON:
CHANCELLOR
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE;
THE FOLLOWING
REFLECTIONS
ARE INSCRIBED,
FROM A DESIRE OF TESTIFYING A DUE SENSE
OF THAT KIND ATTENTION TO THE
LITERARY IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY,
WHICH WAS SHEWN
BY HIS GRACE UPON A LATE OCCASION;

AND IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
VERY PARTICULAR AND UNSOLICITED FAVOURS,
MOST DISINTERESTEDLY CONFERRED UPON

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS a new Edition of this Tract was recommended by some judicious persons, who have been long engaged in the Education of Youth and are desirous of promoting some knowledge of Religion along with their other Sciences, it is accordingly published by itself, in a way best adapted both to the Tutor's convenience and that of his Pupils; and in order to reduce it into the smallest compass such Notes are omitted as appeared to be of a more speculative and abstruse nature, or less immediately connected with the subject of these Reflections.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Life and Character of *CHRIST*.

THE true intention of the gospel writers was not to give a complete account of all the things that *Jesus* did (§), much less of all the reasons, and occasions of them; but only to record

(§) How far this was from being so, may be seen in *Le Clerc*, Harm. Diff. p. 587. from *John* ii. 3. — Add *Joh.* xx. 30, 31. 1 *Cor.* xv. 5. and *Macknight*, Prelim. Obs. to Harm. *passim*.

The same appears to be the case with several of our blessed Saviour's reasonings; where the Evangelists, particularly St. *John*, 'use a shortness of style; and for the most part may be supposed not to relate them at large, as they were spoken; but to set down the principal heads thereof, leaving their conciseness to be supplied by the care and attention of the devout reader.' *Clagett*, Sermon. Vol. III. p. 88. where a remarkable instance is produced to this purpose.

so many naked *facts* †, of each kind, as would be abundantly sufficient to lay a sure foundation for our faith in his divine mission, and by that faith lead us to eternal happiness.

And indeed, the account which we find there delivered, plain as it is and simple, (and by that sim-

† ‘To make evident who that master was, whose disciples they professed themselves, their business was to tell, how they knew him, what miracles he had wrought, and all those other particulars which we read in their gospels; in which they made use of no disquisitions; but in a plain and faithful narrative declared their knowledge of those matters. And this looks like the singular care and wisdom of Divine Providence, that nothing of human invention might be said to be mixed with the gospel; which could not have been prevented, had the Apostles in their writings set down, not only what they themselves had seen, but their conjectures also, and deductions from the actions and sayings of our Saviour.’ *Le Clerc*, Harm. Diss. p. 611. Comp. *Jaquelot de la Ver. et de l’Inspir. des livres du V. et N. T. Part ii. c. 6. p. 301, 305, &c.* or *Duchal*, Sermon. i. ‘It doth not appear, that ever it came into the minds of these Writers to consider, how this or the other action would appear to mankind; or what objections might be raised upon them. But without at all attending to this, they lay the facts before you, at no pains to think whether they would appear credible or not. If the reader will not believe their testimony, there is no help for it; they tell the truth, and attend to nothing else. Surely, this looks like sincerity; and that they published nothing to the world, but what, upon the best evidence, they believed themselves.’ *Duchal*, p. 97, 98.

‘It is remarkable, that through the whole of their histories, the Evangelists have not passed one encomium upon *Jesus*, or upon any of his friends; nor thrown out one reflection against his enemies; although much of both kinds might have been, and no doubt, would have been done by them, had they been governed either by a spirit of imposture, or enthusiasm. Christ’s life is not praised in the gospel, his death is not lamented, his friends are not commended, his enemies are not reproached, nor even blamed; but every thing is told naked and unadorned, just as it happened; and all who read, are left to judge, and make reflections for themselves; a manner of writing, which the historians never would have fallen into, had not their minds been under the guidance of the most sober reason, and deeply impressed with the dignity, importance, and truth of their subject.’ *Macknight*, Harm. Prel. Obs. p. 65. Comp. *Dr. Gerrard’s* Dissertations, Diss. i. sect. 2, 3. or *Lardner’s* two very excellent Discourses on the internal marks of Credibility in the N. T. Memoirs of his Life, &c. p. 240, &c.

simplicity the more credible, *) is in itself of so very extraordinary a nature; and exhibits such an important and amazing scene of wisdom, power, and goodness; as must, when duly attended to, convince us, that it could have no less than a divine original.

I shall endeavour to lay before you such a general view of this transaction, as may help to discover the fitness and propriety of our Saviour's conduct in the whole.

Let us begin where the beloved Disciple dates his gospel; (who had much higher manifestations, and a more perfect knowledge of his Master, than any other of the Evangelists;) and with him reflect a little on Christ's *original state*, and *subsequent humiliation* †. That a Being of inconceivable perfections should *divest himself* ‡ of every glorious attribute; and appear not only in the *form*, but *real nature* of man, and in its most imperfect and forlorn estate; — under all the wants, and weaknesses, and pains of infancy; That he should be content to recover his former qualities

* See Gerrard's 1st Diss. on the evidence of Christianity.

† * To a Being who existed, *before* his birth, in some *happier* state, the *whole* of the embodied state may be regarded as one *continued* act of *humiliation*; and in a sense, as one *uninterrupted* scene of *suffering*. J. N. Scott, Sermon. Vol. II. p. 164. That our blessed Saviour had such a pre-existence, is shewn sufficiently by the Authors referred to in *Considerations* p. 87. and 276. To which may be added B. B. Mordecai, Lett. 2. and Lett. 6.

‡ Phil. ii. 7. *emptied*; *exinanivit*, Greg. Nyss. in 1 Cor. xv. *Evacuavit*, Hieron. in Gal. iii. 13. Some understand this in the most literal sense, See Watts's *Glory of Christ as God-man*, p. 222, 236, &c. Comp. John xvii. 5.

one by one, in slow degrees*, and mixed with all the infirmities of childhood; That after he had received such wisdom and knowledge, as was far above the situation he then appeared in; he should nevertheless continue under a silent subjection to his parents, in a servile, low, laborious employment, for the best part of thirty years: That when he entered on his ministry†, and was endowed with full powers for the due discharge of it, and able to destroy his several adversaries with a single word; he should still undergo the various assaults of those, who eagerly pursued him for no cause, but one that merited a very different return; viz. his attempting to rescue them from their captivity to sin and Satan, and restore them to the liberty of the sons of God; by reconciling them to his government, from which they had so long departed; raising them from that abject state of degeneracy and corruption, into which they were fallen; reducing them to a right sense and sincere practice of their duty, and thereby reinstating them in the divine favour; and rendering them meet to be partakers of a happy immortality: all this taken together constitutes such an instance of condescension in

Jesus,

* Luke ii. 52. vid. Whitby.

† His deferring it to that age was, as Lightfoot observes, according to the law, Num. iv. 3, 23, 35, 43, 47. That at the commencement of this office he was very properly prepared for the execution of it, by a due exercise of private meditation and intense devotion, as well as by a lively prefiguration of the principal difficulties that attended it, is well shewn in an *Enquiry into the Nature and Design of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness*, by H. Farmer.

Jesus, as must needs, one would think, provoke our love and gratitude towards him, whether we comprehend the necessity of it or no. Just reasons at the same time may be given why he should appear in this form rather than any other, as

1st. It should seem from all God's dispensations to mankind, that, though he affords evidence sufficient to convince impartial judgements, yet there is none ever of such a nature as utterly to confound their understandings and compel their assent. Now had *Christ* come from heaven, in the full brightness of his Father's glory attended with a numerous host of Angels; in some such manner as the *Jesuit* missionary was pleased to represent to his Chinese Auditory (See his very remarkable sermon in *Millar*, prop. *Christ*, Vol. II. p. 291, &c.) or had he made his first appearance among the *Jewish* rulers, publicly declaring who he was, and wherefore he was sent; and instantly demanding their submission by a suitable train of most stupendous miracles; so that none of them should have been able either to mistake or to withstand him: this method, besides its giving too much countenance to the wrong notions they had already entertained of the Messiah's kingdom; encouraging them to come into it upon principles entirely opposite to its true constitution; and contradicting the most noble and essential part of his design viz. his purifying* some of them, and suffering others to persist in their wilful

* Mal. iii. 23. Vid. Pocock.

ful ignorance* and hardened unbelief; in order thereby to bring about the greatest benefit to mankind† in general; this method would have been too violent and overbearing to have left any room for real merit; any exercise of the chief moral virtues, in those who adhered to him upon such an immediate view; and the relation of it would have been of too suspicious a sort ever to engage the belief of distant ages and nations: it would have been far every way from affording any competent trial of that fair, humble, upright, and ingenuous temper, which is the chief glory and happiness of each sincere worshipper of God; the discovery whereof was to be one great end of the Messiah's office, and to encourage and reward which, is the true aim of all religious dispensations.

2dly Harsh as this may seem that the great reformer of the human race should devote most of his days to a servile occupation; it furnishes us with one of the strongest evidences of the divine original of Christianity. Had *Jesus* studied every branch of science under the best masters of those days, we might have ascribed his superior accomplishments to human causes; but when destitute of all the means of improvement, he bursts out of obscurity with a lustre that surpassed all the Orators and Philosophers of antiquity, we cannot suspend our belief of his Authority a moment‡.

3dly

* Luke ii. 34. Acts iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

† Vid. Considerations p. 142.

‡ Library No. ix. p. 452. Add Dr. *Hunter's* Observations c. 1. §. 2. c. 2. §. 1.

3dly The circumstance of our Saviour's submitting to be reduced to so low a state as that of a common infant, appears no less necessary to confirm the truth of his mission. In order to prepare the world for his reception, to keep up an expectation of him, as well as to distinguish him when he did appear, and give a lasting proof that he was really come, the several qualifications of his person, pedigree, and chief circumstances of his advent, were at large described long before: it was promised in particular that he should be of the seed of *Abraham*, tribe of *Judah*, family of *David*, &c; but if he had appeared at first in an adult state, he would have had no more relation to one tribe or family than another: if what some of the *Jews* advanced from their traditions*, that *when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is*, were true; it would have been impossible for any such prophecies as these to have been accomplished; and extremely difficult for the people to whom he was primarily sent, much more for others ever to have come to a sufficient certainty about him. If then, upon the whole, it should seem fitting that the Son of God, were he to visit and converse with us, should condescend to conform himself in several respects to beings of our frame, and for a time become like one of them, though it must needs imply great degradation and abasement in him; why may not we suppose it to have been the case

* John vii. 27. Vid. Whitby; Comp. Bp. Chandler's Def. p. 250. and Vind. p. 429.

case in *all* respects (sin only excepted) without any just imputation either on his purity or perfect wisdom? Since any kind of communication between such a divine person and creatures of so low a class will infer some very considerable humiliation in him; should not all arguments against it, drawn merely from the *degree* of that humiliation be esteemed of little weight?—but to return.

When in the prosecution of this great design *Christ* meets with a most unkind reception from the governors of that nation to which he immediately directs himself; instead of publicly displaying all the powers with which he was invested, and admitting all that homage, which the high character of such a messenger from heaven, must have commanded from the multitude; but which very ill comported with the ends for which he came, and with the doctrine he had to deliver*: — In-

* The Divine powers with which *Christ* was invested, were designed as the seal of his mission; and accordingly, they were never applied to a different purpose. This strict appropriation of his miracles to their proper intention, served to point it out more clearly, and to keep it in constant view; to manifest the wisdom and necessity of the works themselves, and to preserve their dignity and authority, which would have been impaired, if not destroyed, by a more general application of them. As *Christ* never applied them to any purpose foreign to their grand intention; so it was in a very peculiar manner necessary, that they should not be employed to protect himself from the calamities and distresses, to which human nature is incident. Had he, when made in the likeness of men, saved himself by miracles from all the evils of humanity; where had been his conflict, his victory, his triumph? or where the consolation and benefit his followers derive from his example, his merit, his crown? Sufferings were the theatre on which he displayed his divine virtues; and they were both the ground of his advancement to the glorious

— Instead, I say, of accepting that due tribute of esteem and veneration, which must naturally attend the opening his divine commission with the more plain undesigning people; but which would have no other effect upon the invincible prejudices of their rulers, than to increase their opposition, give them occasion to misrepresent him still the more, and grow more violent in persecuting all his followers:—He mercifully chooses to avoid every thing of this kind, that might raise their envy, and exasperate their malice. To name only one instance out of many. A strong proof of this appears in his forbidding the leprous person to divulge the manner of his cure [as he did others in like cases for the like reasons;] and likewise in ordering him to present himself to the examination of the *priest*, who was to judge of, and bear testimony to his being cured by a divine power; and who might otherwise have taken occasion to complain of him as a violater of the law, and an invader of the sacerdotal office. *Matt. viii. 4. Mark i. 44. Luke v. 14.** He conceals his pre-eminence under the mean garb of poverty; and withdraws himself occasionally out of the way of popularity and tumult; confining his wonders for the most part to private places, and obscure villages, till he had done enough to ascertain the evidence, and establish

rious office of our Redeemer, and a natural means of inspiring him with compassion to all who were to follow him. *Farmer's Enquiry into Christ's Temptation, p. 71, 72. Comp. Benson's Life of Christ, p. 34.*

* See *Le Clerc*, Harm. p. 92. or his Add. to *Ham.* on *Matt viii. 4.* or *Lightfoot*, Harm. Vol. I. p. 648. Add *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 9.

establish the belief of his divine authority amongst them; till he was ready to finish all that remained for him to do in a more publick manner, by witnessing his last *good confession*, both to the *Jewish* and the *Roman* magistrates; by declaring the true end of his coming into the world; and bearing testimony to his most unblameable life in it, before these iniquitous judges; and (which was the necessary consequence of that, without either violently overruling them, or miraculously escaping from them) sealing the same confession with his blood.

Consistently with the same plan, the persons he chose for partners and companions in this work, were of the lowest class, as well in station, as abilities; and who could only follow him at first upon the lowest views; and would at every turn, be urging and impatient to have these accomplished; nor were they to be let into his real aim, but by slow steps, and after a long series of gentle discipline. Such persons were in many respects most difficult to be dealt with; but no unfit instruments in that, for which they were then designed, namely, to testify what they had so often seen and heard; and on all accounts most proper to afford the best, most unexceptionable evidence to futurity: such as could by no means be supposed capable of themselves either to conceive a scheme so great as that of reforming a *world*; of altering all its customs and opinions; or entertain the least hope of accomplishing it, whenever suggested to them: such as wanted both the courage and the conduct to attempt this vast, and truly

truly original design, with any prospect of success? such lastly, as he must suffer often to doubt, and dispute with him; sometimes to distrust, desert, and even deny him: to convince after-ages, that they were such as could not with the least shew of reason, be suspected of having at first concerted all this of themselves; or carried it on afterwards among themselves; or effected what they did effect of it, by any method merely human*.

With such as these did *Christ* hold conversation, during the whole course of his ministry; affectionately complying with their weakness, and patiently enduring their perverseness, in order to cure them both; to strengthen and increase their faith by degrees, and free them from all superstitious fears; to open their eyes, and enlarge their understandings so far, that at length they might, *even of themselves, judge what was right*, and teach the same to others. To these, and by them to the world, he sets a perfect pattern of true heroism, *viz.* humility, and resignation to the will of God; of meekness, and the most extensive benevolence to man; demonstrating to what height virtue may be carried, under the most disadvantageous circumstances; and shewing the practicableness of

* Mirum est, quam parum acuti essent apostolorum nonnulli: sed data opera tales a Christo electos fuisse verisimile est; ne dum putabant se intelligere quis esset, quidve moliretur, quidpiam ingenio suo freti, quod Evangelio noceret, aggredierentur; neve possent dogmatum, quæ nunciabantur, inventores haberi. *Claric. in Job. xiv. 7. Comp. Id. Eccl. Hist. Ann. xxvii. 14, 15.* How different is the character of *St. Paul*? and with what propriety therefore was his call deferred, till different qualities and talents became of equal use, to the propagation and defence of the gospel! *V. Lotke's Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 508, &c. Fol.*

of each part of our duty, in the greatest difficulties. With the utmost zeal and constancy, does he endeavour to dissuade, and drive men from their ruin; and in the most endearing manner, strive to draw, and win them over to their true interest and happiness; and raise their minds above the little interests of this world. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you, — but let not your hearts be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you. Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* But for a complete specimen of that inimitable tenderness and intense devotion, which made so distinguishing a part of our blessed Saviour's character, and which contributed so greatly to the comfort and support of his disciples under all their trials; I refer to these admirable chapters of St. John's gospel, part of the thirteenth, and the four following; and appeal to the experience of even the coldest and most careless reader, whether he can help being, in some measure, still affected by them; particularly the last*.

Having denied himself the comforts and enjoyments of this world, in the same cause for which he left the glories of the other, and at length laid down his life in executing that scheme

* That these bear the plainest marks of being genuine, and therefore furnish a strong presumptive argument for the truth of our religion, see *Duchal's Discourses*, Sermon. 4. That they contain a beautiful allusion to the high-priest's act of atoning for himself, his brethren, and all the people, on the great day of expiation, as prescribed in *Lev. xvi. 6—17*, may be seen in *Benson's Life of Christ*, c. 1. sect. 2, p. 16. and c. 11. sect. 7. p. 489.

scheme for which he at first assumed it; he does not even here quit the same merciful design, but raises himself to revive the hopes of his desponding followers; to comfort and confirm them in the faith, and give them full assurance, that he now had all power in heaven and earth. And great occasion was there for such ground of comfort to them, who thought they had lost him, for whose sake they had parted with all things beside; greater yet to reform and rectify their notions of, and expectations from him; which were still fixed on present prospects of advancement, notwithstanding whatsoever he had taught them to the contrary*: nor could they help concluding, that he would at this time certainly make use of all his power, in the entire destruction of his and their enemies; and the erecting of the so long looked-for kingdom, to which every other kingdom of the earth should bow. But he soon shews them, how far this was from being any part of his office, as described by the prophets; how utterly inconsistent with his whole behaviour in discharging it: that on his very first entrance on it, he had rejected and despised the offer of these kingdoms, and their glory;

* That the true scope of his whole Sermon on the mount was to correct the carnal notions they had of the *Messiah's* kingdom, and the bad dispositions they were under in consequence thereof; and that this is the right key for opening the proper meaning and connection of that Sermon, is demonstrated at large by *Blair*, in his excellent Paraphrase on the 5th 6th and 7th chapters of *St. Matt.* and throughout his discourses on that subject. — That it contains all things, that were then wanting, and necessary to the salvation of those hearers, to whom our Saviour at that time addressed himself, *ib.* Vol. iv. S. 20. p. 301.

ry; and that for the future, they must think of renouncing all their narrow national prejudices of a peculium fraught with all temporal privileges, and full of nothing but conquest, wealth, and power: that instead of coming a *Messiah* to bless his people in their sense, by distinguishing them from the rest of mankind in things, to which they had no better title, and of which they were not like to make any better use; by not only delivering them from their subjection to all other nations, but reducing every nation into an absolute subjection to them; — that he was to bring them blessings and deliverances, and raise them to a dominion of quite another kind; to bless them by turning every one of them from their *iniquities*; to deliver them from their spiritual chains of darkness, death, and misery; and bring them to *the light of life*, and happiness in his heavenly kingdom: the way whereunto they were to be the means of opening to all the rest of the world, inviting mankind in general to enter with them into it; as their forefathers had been the great instruments of leading men to the knowledge of that one true God, who is the giver of it. That as these his followers had all along seen ample proofs of his divine legation to this purpose, and were now to be let into the nature and design of his undertaking, so far as they were able to bear a part in it themselves; so they should shortly be invested with sufficient powers to carry it on without him, and enabled to pro-

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claim

claim and propagate it to the ends of the earth*.

After forty days spent by Christ in training and preparing his disciples for this great work of

* Would we know more distinctly what Christ taught and what is his religion, we may perhaps be able to comprehend it sufficiently under the following Description. He came with full credentials from the Father, to transact our peace and union with him; to proclaim an entire amnesty for past offences, and procure an effectual remedy against the dominion of any future ones; to publish new terms of salvation, (a new doctrine, says Grotius, Ep. 33. requiring sincere repentance, and promising remission of sins, and everlasting life,) and put us into a condition of acting up to them; to restore a communication between God and us, (by prayer and the sacraments;) to lay down sufficient rules for our behaviour towards God, ourselves, and one another; to offer the clearest and most cogent arguments for our compliance with these, (in the several articles of our belief) and thereby afford us the most ample means and motives to resemble the divine nature, grow in grace, and qualify ourselves for unlimited degrees of happiness and perfection. By his own example pointing out the way to this; and by his doctrine, in the first place, reforming the wrong judgments, and perverse dispositions of mankind in matters of religion, (of those more especially among whom he lived; vid. last. n. *.) removing the false principles on which they grounded it; the foolish practices which they had incorporated with it; and in their stead instituting such important duties, and directing to the acquirement of such intrinsically good, virtuous habits, as would in their own natures necessarily lead to that state of perfection; and become each an essential part thereof: founding the whole upon its proper basis, the true LOVE of GOD; and joining all together in that bond of peace, and of all virtues, CHARITY to man. The substance therefore or material part of Christ's religion, contains all that can possibly be comprehended under the notion of pure religion; whatsoever is really excellent and useful in every station or relation of life: with all such helps as tend to encourage and support us in pursuing this, and are in general necessary to the attainment of it: it admits and includes every thing, which either may conduce to the welfare of man in the present state; or duly fit and dispose them for everlasting happiness in another, and in short, can be described no otherwise, than by a summary recital of its several ingredients, such as is given us by the two apostles, Phil. iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 4, 5, &c. *Whatsoever things are true — honest — just — pure — lovely and of good report*

Adding to our faith — virtue — knowledge — temperance — patience — godliness — brotherly kindness — CHARITY. Vid. Considerations, p. 33. or Bp. of Killmore's Essay on the Priesthood, p. 68, &c. or Jessop's Tracts; who seems to have had as pure and perfect notions of the Christian institution, as any writer in his time. See also Beland's summary of the Christian Doctrine with regard to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. Advantage and Necessity, &c. Vol. II. Part. ii. c. 13.

establishing a kingdom of so very different a sort, and to be established by ways so different, from what they had hitherto imagined, he meets them all together; leads them out to some distance from *Jerusalem*; takes leave of them with his last benediction; and having promised to give them yet farther proof of his care and love, by sending them another *Comforter*; ascends visibly before them into heaven.

Having taken a short view of our Saviour's conduct, more particularly in *private life*, and run over some of the steps of his *humiliation*; let us stop to reflect a little on the use and excellence of such a *character*, and observe some of the benefits which we receive from this part of his conduct.

Whenever we turn our thoughts upon the infinite perfections of the most high God, and try to form some suitable apprehensions of them; though they appear well worthy of all adoration, yet is our view of them but faint and dim, on account of their sublimity and distance from us; and what views we have of them, are apt rather to excite astonishment and awe, than move the softer, more endearing passions: and therefore the ideas of *loving* and *delighting in* God were such, as the most elevated heathen writer could not reach.

But in this system the Deity lets himself down to our capacities, and is on a level with our tenderest affections; discovers himself under the near relations of a friend, a father; displays such an affect-

affecting scene of the most merciful, mild condescension, as must strike even the dullest, and warm the coldest heart.

The Lord, who knows our frame, sees that we are not capable of beholding him in his full glory; and therefore kindly draws a veil over it, and suits his several dispensations to the subjects of them. He sends a messenger in our own state and circumstances; who being encompassed with our infirmities, experiencing our difficulties and temptations, and having a fellow-feeling of our troubles; might shew how well qualified he was to bear with us, and help us to bear them; to have compassion on the ignorant, and those that were in error; pointing out to us the true way, and enabling us to walk therein: leading us gently by the hand*, inviting and encouraging us to come to God through him. *I am the way, the truth, and the life; he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. All that my Father hath is mine: I and my Father are one, as I and you are one: I have not called you servants, but friends and brethren. The Father himself loveth you; and if ye love him, as he loveth me, and I love him; we will manifest ourselves to you; we will come unto you, and make our abode with you.*

Thus he, who was to his own people formerly the *Lord of Hosts*, a mighty God and terrible; jealous, avenging; and whose whole worship was stiled *fear*, (a worship well accommodated to such people;) is now to men of more enlarged minds, under

* *Lactant. de Ver. Sap. L. iv. 24.*

under this proportionably more indulgent dispensation, *the God of all joy, and consolation; the Father of mercies*; whose children and heirs we are said to be; whom we are taught to approach in a more liberal way, with a true *filial* assurance; whose darling attribute is goodness; and the first principle, and great commandment in his law, the end and the completion of it, *love*.

These amiable representations, confirmed by a long train of condescending meekness, and illustrated in the most free, familiar manner; must above all things tend to strengthen and invigorate our faith, enliven our hope, and draw our whole soul after him that so loved us, and lived amongst us: especially that, which must seem to be the greatest possible instance of affection for us, his voluntary laying down his life, to reconcile us to him and our heavenly Father. This cannot but endear his *character* to all, who are capable of giving attention to it; and will, in a much more near and tender manner, unite him to us, and make the memory and contemplation of him infinitely more affecting; than that of any other Being, however great, good, and glorious, who has not undergone the like office, or appeared in such lights to us.

And though, in order to direct our reason and judgment to the principal object of religious worship, and guard against every misconception of our true relation thereto; we are oft reminded, who it was that originally provided this redemption for us; who *so first loved the world, as*

to give his only begotten Son, for our salvation; and are taught to refer all, ultimately, *to the glory of God, the Father*: yet in that other, no less essential, (perhaps with the bulk of mankind, much superior) part of our nature, by which religion and every thing else takes the strongest hold of us, the *passions*; we are necessarily touched in a much more sensible manner, with what is so very adequate and obvious to our present comprehensions, and as it were analogous to what we feel among ourselves; and may be satisfied, that the kind Author of our being will make due allowances for this, so far as it is necessary and unavoidable; which is the case at present universally; and every one that reflects upon the general turn of his own mind in his devotion, will, I believe, find it so: which is an experimental proof of the propriety and beauty of the plan in this respect.

And as this dispensation was well suited to the frame of human nature, and an improvement on the foregoing one to the *Jews*; so was it no less fitly accommodated to the state of the *beathen* world; and no less necessary in the circumstances under which that then was, and must have continued.

The founders and supporters of religious institutes among the *Gentiles*, had nothing but some empty apparitions of their idle deities, or more uncertain tales, and blind reports to build upon; some of them ill devised by themselves, others in great part copied from true scripture-history,

or primitive tradition; but all so strangely abused and blended with each kind of vice and folly, to comply with the general corruption of mankind, and suit them to the several tastes and tempers of particular countries; as at length rendered the whole little else than a compound of absurdity and immorality; and made their very worship and devotion impious. Their doctrines and subsequent rites, must, by this means, be very complicated; and vary according to the various degrees of superstition and impurity that reigned amongst them: but yet were so far of the same cast and complexion, that there could be no great room for a competition with each other, in point of either truth, or excellence; it would be hard to distinguish between the different sorts of evidence and authority producible in different places for the one; or of the reasons that might be alledged to explain, and vindicate the other; since custom was the common plea for both: since both were equally uncertain in their origin; and both alike *unprofitable as pertaining to the conscience*. So that when any species of idolatry was once established in a city or nation, it must with the generality, be either a point of necessity to abide by it, since they could find no better; or appear a matter of indifference, whether they should exchange it for any other; or admit that other along with it, as occasion served: and this might well be left to the determination of the state.

Such were the circumstances of the heathen world,

world, when *Christ* appeared; to put an end to all those *lying vanities*, and turn men to *the living and true God*; by introducing a system of religion suitable to such a Being, and which would lead them to the love and likeness of him.

Farther; men had been so long used to the notion of appearances and messages from Heaven, and these been made the ground of every article of faith, and mode of worship; that nothing but a *real one*, one of a superior kind, and better circumstanced; could be conceived effectual to silence every wild pretence of that sort; and reduce men to a right faith, and a suitable practice: nothing less would be able to lead such to a firm belief in one true, spiritual, invisible God; and induce them to worship him *in spirit and in truth*; and assure them of always finding access to him, through one only all-sufficient *Mediator*. Dry, abstract reasoning would go but a little way with the vulgar, who are most susceptible of impression; but yet require something strong and visible to strike them; nor would a few transient signs and wonders serve to make any such impression last. Of these they had too many reported among them; and the more common such reports grew, the less were they minded; not only on account of their suspicious evidence; though that was enough to discredit them; but chiefly for want of connection with some regular course of goodness, and a set of doctrines worthy of such interposition from Heaven; and of their being expressly produced as vouchers for these

doctrines, and applied directly to confirm that interposition.

This did *Christ* fully and frequently; in the plainest and most public manner: and hereby did his institution outshine, and extinguish every part of heathenism, as well in point of evidence afforded to it; as of instruction conveyed by it. From whence might be drawn another proof, both of the usefulness of such a plan, and of the great necessity that there was for it.

But I proceed to some remarkable circumstances in our Saviour's more *public* life, and *manner of teaching*.

As to the former, we cannot but observe a surprising mixture of humility and greatness, dignity and self-abasement, in his general demeanour; both which were equally instructive in their turns. Sometimes we find him solemnly asserting his superior nature, at other times the meekest and the lowest of the sons of men: sometimes reminding his followers, that he could command legions of angels, were it necessary; at others, apprising them, that he should be more destitute of common conveniences, than even the beasts of the field, or birds of the air; now telling them, that a greater than *Solomon* is amongst them; now, washing his disciples' feet. Conscious of his own power and just prerogative, yet all submission to the powers in being; complying with their laws and institutions, however hazardous, or inconvenient to him; and paying their demands to the uttermost, though at the
expence

expenditure of a miracle. On some occasions, publishing the character and office which he bore; on others, carefully concealing them; in order to prevent the hasty misconstruction of his friends; to guard against the inveterate malice of his foes; and gain sufficient time to fix a good foundation for the faith of all. None more industrious and zealous in the cause of God; none more indifferent and resigned in his own: He patiently endures the affronts and outrage to his person, and the frequent insults on his reputation; and intercedes for the forgiveness of his murderers: yet when his Father's honour is concerned, he vindicates it instantly, and with uncommon warmth; he publicly chastises the prophaners of his temple; and threatens the severest punishment to such as would continue to blaspheme the Power and Spirit by which he was acting. He is ready to receive publicans and harlots; disdains not to converse with heretics and schismatics; persons most odious and of worst repute; but whom he sees to be truly penitent, and really desirous of instruction: while he rejects the formal, sanctimonious hypocrite; and reprimands the self-sufficient *Pharisee*. He detects, and with authority rebukes, the flattery of the proud, designing querrist; but satisfies each scruple, and resolves each doubt, of the sincere and humble searcher after truth, even before they are intimated to him. He cherishes the broken-hearted; comforts the desponding; strengthens and supports the weak and wavering; condescends to the infirmities of

the meanest and most despicable, that has the least spark of goodness in him; but never gratifies the vanity, or gives way to the petulancy of the greatest. Vice from him meets with due discouragement and just reproof in all men, even those of the highest station; virtue with kind compassion, and a generous aid, in any of the lowest.

Nor did this mixture of so various, and seemingly opposite qualities, which constituted the foregoing contrast, proceed from any variation in his temper; but wholly in that of those among whom he conversed. He steadily adheres to the same principle, and constantly pursues one plain and uniform design, of doing all the service possible, on all occasions, to all sorts of people: of doing it in the most agreeable manner too, whenever that becomes consistent with their real interest: sympathizing with men in their several states and dispositions; suiting himself to every one's circumstances, and capacity; applying to each part of the human constitution for access; and watching every motion of the heart to gain admittance: being himself ever affable, and easy of access to all that seriously applied to him; accepting any invitation, and admitting every well-meant instance of respect: nay making a voluntary offer of his company, whenever he knew it would be useful and acceptable: indulging the most secret wish of such as would receive an obligation from him; and enhancing that by his obliging readiness to confer it. He submitted to the lowest offices for the
sake

sake of others; and was at every body's service that desired his assistance. He condescended to the meanest company, when he had a prospect of doing any good upon them; and was content to lose the reputation of being a good man, that he might more effectually serve the ends of piety and goodness*.

His conversation was free, and familiar; open, and undisguised; sober and rational: his carriage clear from all affected singularity; all rigid and unnatural severity; and any of those austere, forbidding airs, which used to be put on by others; and were apt to procure them so much reverence, upon the like occasion. His very miraculous works, were no less evident signs of mercy, goodness, generosity; than of power: and equally adapted to convince men's understandings, and engage their affections; as to remove their maladies, or to relieve their wants: his first public miracle being no more than a proper act of kindness, or humanity; in preventing the confusion of a poor relation, by a very seasonable supply of what was wanting in the entertainment; which want perhaps could not have otherwise been conveniently supplied; and was most probably occasioned by the extraordinary concourse he himself drew thither (σ): his last being no less than

* *Louise's Directions*, p. 197.

(σ) *John* iii. 1, 2, &c. Notwithstanding all these evident marks of goodness in this miracle of our blessed Saviour, beside many others that might have been mentioned; (such as his giving countenance to a due celebration of that Institution which soon afterwards grew into so much disrepute, and justifying that liberal use of all God's crea-

than an instance of the highest and most undeserved

com-

creatures which came to be so extravagantly censured, see *Jortin's* Remarks, Vol. II. p. 18. or *Theol. Repos.* Vol. III. No. 3.) yet it has met with no better treatment, than any other circumstance attending either his divine character or mission. *Chubb* has been at the unnecessary pains to revive some of *Woolsten's* idle objections on this head, without either making any improvements on them, or taking the least notice of the large and clear answers given to them; as is the common case with this kind of writers. He dwells upon the *barbousness, impropriety, and fallaciousness* of *Christ's* reply to his mother; and urges the *intemperance*, which must needs have been promoted by this miraculous production of wine. *Post. Works*, Vol. II. p. 185-6-7-8.

As to the *barbousness*, which arises chiefly from the word, *woman*, in our language; it has been shewn, that *γυνή* is a term used by the best writers very consistently with the highest respect; and as such, most undoubtedly applied elsewhere to the same person; *Joh. xix. 26.* That the phrase *τι μοι καὶ σοι*, was no more than a common expression of some gentle rebuke for intermeddling in another's province; *2 Sam. xvi. 10. xix. 22. 2 Kings iii. 13. 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.* and might be exceedingly proper, and even necessary at *Christ's* first opening his commission; in order to guard against any suspicion of his mother's having *concerted matters with him*; (as the same author would insinuate, p. 186.) to prevent her interfering at all in it, or pretending to any influence or authoritative direction, in the case of working miracles especially; which was of public concern: and so the following words may be taken interrogatively, *ὡς ἔτι ἢ ὥρα περ;* *Is not the time of my ministry now come?* To which we may add, that whatever apparent slight or severity occurs in this or any other circumstance where she is introduced, it may have been ordered providentially, (as the same thing seems to have been done on the like account in other cases, v. g. that of *St. Peter* more remarkably;) to guard against those many gross abuses of her name and interest, those very grievous corruptions that in after-times were set up in the church of *Christ*, and supported chiefly by that near relation which she bore to him according to the flesh. To the same purpose may be applied those other seemingly disparaging accounts, which he is pleased to give of such relations, in comparison of those who stood related to him in a much higher sense, viz. a heavenly one; *Matt. xii. 46-50. Mar. iii. 31-35. Luk. viii. 19-21. xi. 27, 28.* see *Clarke's* xvii Sermons, p. 236. [and on the same principle might be founded that remarkable estrangement between *John* the Baptist and our blessed Saviour, notwithstanding their being so very near relations; as is observed by *Doddridge* on *Joh. i. 31. Fam. Ex. Vol. I. p. 122. not. c. Add Jortin, Disc. v. p. 194. 2d Ed. and Dr. Bell's Enquiry.*] As to his *hour not being come*, if taken in another sense, i. e. of doing any thing for her benefit in particular; that may relate to the *hour* of his death; agreeably to the common use of this word in the Gospel,

compassion; in calmly healing the wound of one of

pel, (comp. *Job*. vii. 8, 30. viii. 20. xii. 27. xiii. 1. xvii. 1. In like manner at the very beginning of *Christ's* ministry, the Devil is said to depart from him for a *season*, *Luk*. iv. 13. though that was so late as till his last suffering, called their *hour*, i. e. that of his enemies, and the power of darkness. *Luk*. xxii. 53.) for which, to prevent all secular views, he thought good to prepare her at the very entrance on his office; signifying that she was to receive no kind of worldly advantage from it till he left the world; and when that time came, he recommended her accordingly to his beloved disciple; who took her to his own home, and provided for her as if she were his own mother. So far was *Christ's* reply from any of that *fallacy* and *contradiction* in every view, with which this author has been pleased to charge it; that even on this imperfect view of the case, we may be able to discern clear tokens of the same divine wisdom and disinterested goodness here, which shines out in each of his other discourses.

Nor is there any more ground for that suggestion of *excess*, from the *guests having drunk so very freely as to exhaust plenty of wine*; ib. p. 188. since from the known regulations at all marriage-feasts, there was no danger of it; from the low circumstances of the person entertaining here, no great room to apprehend that any extraordinary plenty could be provided; but rather the contrary: nor from what *Christ* supplied, the least encouragement given to intemperance, during the remainder of the feast, which lasted several days; commonly seven: and wherein, if we will suppose that this wine must have been all drunk up, which we have no occasion to do; (see *Jennings*, Lect. B. iii c. 2. p. 136.) as much might easily have been consumed by an extraordinary conflux of the people in a few days, as would perhaps have otherwise held out the rest. [V. *Law*, Com. in Harm. p. 109.] So little reason was there any way for such rude insults on this part of our blessed Saviour's history; that it might easily be shewn to be of a piece, and bear the same characters of wisdom and goodness with the rest. As the Gospel was first to be offered to his own countrymen, (to whom the promises were made) whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear; and whose rejecting of it turned to the more immediate benefit of the rest of the world; so was this public occasion very properly made use of for the opening of it, in the first place, to his kinsfolk and acquaintance; who if they were not before acquainted with his divine mission, from any miracles performed in private, [though it is probable that some of them were, his mother in particular; see *Doddr.* on *Job*. ii. 3.] had hereby a fair opportunity of fully canvassing its evidence, and consulting him upon it, during all the festival; might easily have satisfied each other about the truth of his pretensions, and entitled themselves to the honour of being his first disciples: though, for no less wise and good reasons, they were most of them permitted to lose all such opportunities of being instructed by him, to shut their eyes and harden their hearts amidst the clearest and the strongest evidence, and at length become

of those who came with eagerness * to take away his life; and thereby shewing, that with the same ease he could have delivered himself, or destroyed them.

The like might be observed in almost every other case, where he exerted an extraordinary power; which he did, in a manner that more particularly suited his own character †.

But what we are now considering in the life of *Christ*, is its more ordinary course, and common tenor; which we find chiefly conversant in *social Duties*, as these come into use most frequently, and are of the greatest and most general benefit to mankind; and setting us a pattern of performing these, which was the most inviting to us, the most imitable by us, and the least capable of being mistaken, or perverted: a pattern, not only of perfect innocence, but usefulness, in

of all men the most inveterate both against him and his doctrine; which yet, instead of impairing the credit of either, served to illustrate it the more, and render it more incontestable in all ages; by clearing the whole scheme from all possible suspicion of any family-contrivance; of being carried on by private compact; (as the same conduct in the rulers did effectually from the charge of its being any part of their own national policy;) or having been calculated for the separate interest of any particular place, or party of men whatsoever. Nay, every one of these persons who either rejected him at first, or afterwards forsook him, without ever being able to discover the least circumstance of such a design, affords a plain proof of the contrary; as might be made appear beyond all contradiction.

* *Malchus* had come out, with violence, to apprehend him; and had perhaps treated him with some peculiar insolence, so as to provoke *Peter* to cut off his ear. *Benson*, p. 439. He is supposed to be one of those servants who smote *Christ* upon the face [*Mark* xv. 65.] even after a miraculous power had been exerted in his favour.

† A proof of this, and a specimen of the moral or spiritual, as well as prophetick import of our Saviour's miracles, may be seen in *Jonson's* Remarks on *Eccl. H.* Vol. II. p. 16, &c.

in every circumstance, and situation; of joining sometimes in such relaxations both of mind and body, as would tend to the comfort and support of each; such prudent, moderate enjoyment of the good things of this world, as might convert them both to the present, and the future benefit of all those who partook of them: of undergoing all the toils and difficulties, labours and distresses, to which we are subject; of bearing all the evils and afflictions, the crosses and calamities of life; with so much patience, constancy, and perseverance, as would prevent our sinking under them; and at length make us *more than conquerors* over them. A pattern, of particular affection and esteem for friends; of general kindness, and good-will toward enemies; of gratitude and love for all good offices; of meekness and a most forgiving temper under any ill usage; of strict obedience to superiors, either in church or state, so far as is consistent with our duty to the supreme Being (†); mildness and condescension

(†) In proof of this, beside the instance already given, of his most scrupulous exactness to avoid the least appearance of intruding on another's office; we may observe, that when he is obliged to expose the great hypocrisy and villainy of the *Jewish* doctors, who were the most injurious adversaries of his cause, he carefully distinguishes between their authority or commission, and the exercise thereof; between their publick teaching, and their practice.

The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. Matt. xxiii, 2, 3. Hoc dicit Christus, ne putaretur aut adversarius esse *Mosis*, aut eorum odio, aut cupiditate principatus, ipsos in sequentibus reprehendere. Et quoniam defectus in personis, non professione, erat; providet, ut personarum ratione posthabita, muneri, ministerio, et professioni ipsi, sua dignitas integra maneat. *L. Brugens, in loc. Comp. Wolzogen, p. 370.*

So

to inferiors, in whatsoever respect, or whatsoever degree; of justice, fidelity, benevolence and charity to all. In short, his whole life was a lecture of true practical philosophy, and each part of it pointed out some virtue proper for our imitation*. For this indeed we have the testimony of unbelievers themselves. "In Christ (confesses one of them) we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a becoming modesty and sobriety: just and honest, upright and sincere; and above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour. One who did no wrong, no injury to any man; in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good, not only by his preaching and ministry; but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature, when in its native purity and simplicity; and shewed at once what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that Gospel he preached unto them†.

Which brings me in the next place, to his *manner of teaching*: and this was likewise the most easy and natural that could be imagined. He generally draws his doctrine from the present occasion; the conversation that is passing; or the ob-

So far is our Saviour's history from consisting of that angry opposition to his superiors, as such; or from discovering that envious, aspiring, factious disposition, which some persons have had either the weakness, or the wickedness to suggest.

* See some of the principal of these virtues specified in Bp. Fowler's *Design of Christianity*, c. 5. or *Duchal*, on Christ's general Character, Sermon. i. ii. iii.

† Chubb, *True Gosp. of J. Christ*, sect. 8. p. 55, 56.

objects that surround him; from the most common occurrences, and occupations: from the time of the day; the season of the year; the service of the Jewish synagogue (v), or their solemnities;

(v) Thus, he alludes sometimes to the manner of teaching there; *Matt. x. 27. Quod in aure auditis, prædicate.* Doctor, qui auditoribus aliquid traditionale prælegebat et exponebat, non quidem clara voce rem efferebat; sed leni susurro, Hebraica, in aurem interpretis mustitabat; qui deinde id sonore, sermone vernaculo, enuntiabat populo. *Lamy, Harm. p. 187. Comp. Lightf. in loc. et in Matt. iv. 23.* [Where another allusion occurs in the latter part of the verse, about proclaiming on the house top. *Lightf. Vol. II. p. 180.*] Sometime to the lesson read therein: *Luke iv. 17.* Vulgo sentiant interpretes casu traditum Domino librum *Isaïæ*; five potius divina providentia procurante ut ille traderetur, ubi clarissime de Christo prophetatum erat. Verum magis eluxit divina providentia si hoc Sabbato legeretur pars illa *Isaïæ*, in qua invenit locum ubi scriptum erat, *Spiritus Domini super me*: Sic incipit cap. lxi. *Isaïæ*, quod legebatur Sabbato 1mo aut 2do Mensis Tisri, ut videre est in lectionariis Judæorum. [Comp. *Lightf. in loc. or Wait's Gosp. Hist. B. ii. f. 5.*] Hoc autem anno vitæ ejus circa quem hæremus, æræ Christianæ 31mo, duo illa Sabata, in quibus *Isaïas* prælegebatur, incidebant 1mum in 8vam diem Septembris, alterum in 15mam. Congruit illud tempus parabolis sementis, quas modo proposuerat Dominus ab ipsis rebus præsentibus, ut sapientiam ejus docebat. Etenim in mense Tisri semen terræ mandabatur; ut videre est in illis verbis paraphraseos Chaldaicæ in Ecclesiastem xi. 2. *Da portionem bonam seminis agro tuo in Tisri, et ne cobibeas a seminando etiam in Cbisfeu.* Id *Harm. p. 258.* To which may be added *John x. 1, &c.* as below, and *John vii. 37, 38.* *Lamy* pursues the circumstances of Christ's alluding to the lesson for the day so far, as by it to adjust the time and order of several passages in the Gospels, v. g. *Luke x. 25-37.* Idcirco autem hanc parabolam Samaritani refero ad tempus quod pentecostem subsecutum est; quia hanc parabolam videtur Dominus proposuisse in synagoga, occasione scripturæ quæ tunc ibi legeretur. Illud enim, *Ecce quidam legis-peritus surrexit tentans eum*, indicat sedisse hunc legisperitum, et de more proposuisse quæstionem Domino; quam ille solverit, convertens animum et oculos legis periti ad ipsam Scripturam modo lectam; quod indicat illud, *Quomodo legis, &c.* Locus autem Scripturæ, ut puto, erat versus 5tus cap. 6ti *Deut.* quod caput legebatur ultimo Sabbato mensis *Ab*, uno aut altero mense post pentecostem. Id. p. 219.

The same author observes, that the order of time being generally neglected, both by *S. Mark* and *S. Luke*; their narratives are to be regulated as well by the foregoing observations, as by comparing them with *S. Matt.* who was an eye-witness of most things, and therefore

ties; from some extraordinary accidents, remarkable places, or transactions; and the like.

Thus, upon curing a blind man, he styles himself the light of the world; and admonishes the *Pharisees* of their spiritual blindness, and inexcusable obstinacy, in refusing to be cured and enlightened by him §. On little children being brought to him, he recommends the innocence and humility of that state, as very proper qualities for all those who would become true members of his church; and under the same figure, intimates the privileges that belong to all such †. On being told, that his mother and brethren came to seek him; he declares to all those among his disciples, who were desirous of learning, and disposed to follow his instructions; that they were equally dear to him, and should be equally regarded by him, as his very nearest friends and relations *. Beholding the flowers of the field, and the fowls of the air, he teaches his disciples to frame right and worthy notions of that providence which supports them, and therefore will support Beings of a rank so much superior to them

therefore went by a local memory. *Comp. Newt. on Dan. p. 153. or Hartley, Observ. Vol. II. p. 103.*

Lamy has another remark, which seems to deserve consideration as of some consequence to the settling a true harmony of the Gospels, viz. that *John the Baptist* suffered two imprisonments, one from the *Sanhedrim* [Matt. iv. 12, — xvii. 12.] before that other from *Herod*; vid. *Harm. p. 105, and 367.* and a particular treatise of his; *De duobus Vinculis Johannis.*

§ *John ix. 5, 59, 41.*

† *Mark x. 14, 15. Matt. xviii. 4, 5, 6, 10.*

* *Matt. xii. 47. Mark iii. 32. vid. Benson, c. 10, sect. ii.* Other instances of this kind may be seen below.

them*. Observing the fruits of the earth, he instructs them to judge of men by their fruits; and not to be themselves unfruitful under all the means of grace†. Taking notice of their behaviour at a feast, he first gives general advice therein to both the master and his guests; to the one that he should direct his munificence to such as most wanted it‡, to the other that they beware of that affectation of place and distinction which was so troublesome to the rest, and generally ended in their own mortification; and afterwards brings them to the consideration of a better entertainment, to which they were all invited; but of which few among them would be persuaded to render themselves worthy§. From meat and drink, he leads them to the eating of his body, and drinking his blood, in a spiritual sense; the being nourished with his doctrine, and partaking of his kingdom§. From outward washing, to the

* *Matt. vii. 26, 28. Luke xii. 24, &c.*

† *Matt. vii. 16. Luke. vi. 43, &c.*

‡ This is all that *Christ* can fairly be supposed to mean, *Luke xiv. 12, 13.* when in his way of instructing occasionally, and by a special instance then before him, he exhorts his followers when they make a feast to call the poor, the maimed, &c. *V. Crill. Op. Tom. i. p. 357* with *Le Clerc, Whistby, Gros.* in loc.

§ *Luke xiv. 7, 16.* Comp. *Doddr.* in loc. Thus, probably a wedding procession passing by, gave occasion to the beautiful parable of the ten virgins. *Wynne on Matt. xxv. 1.*

§ *John vi. 31, 53, &c.* — See a like allusion on the mention of meat, *John iv. 32.* The same thing in all probability occasioned that remarkable answer to the *Syrophœnician* woman, *Matt. xv. 26. Mark vii. 27.* in which he calls the heathen Dogs, not in conformity to his own sentiments, but to the common language of the Jews; glancing perhaps as he spoke it, at those who sat at table with him, and thereby secretly reproving the insulence of such harsh language and hard thoughts. See *Lamy, Harm. 313* and *Lightfoot* in loc.

purifying of the heart, and cleansing the affections*. From tasting of the fruit of the vine after the paschal supper; to the celebration of an eternal festival of freedom, rest, and happiness in another world †. From the *salt*, he takes occasion to acquaint them with the nature of their office, which was to season the minds of men, and keep them from the contagion of this world; as well as give them a true taste and relish for the enjoyments of that kingdom; and at the same time reminds them of the absolute necessity for their duly executing this their office; otherwise, instead of being the best, the purest, and most useful; they would become the most worthless, and incurable, and contemptible among mankind ‡. Those that were fishers, he teaches how to catch men ||; and shews them how much this would resemble their former employment, in taking of all kinds, both bad and good; which were at first inseparable, but would at length be carefully distinguished from each other §. Seeing the money-changers, he

John xiii. 8.

† *Matt. xxvi. 29. Luke xxiii. 17, 18.* Ex occasione vini conspicui et proprie dicti, Christus docet discipulos se non amplius celebraturum cum iis ullam liberationem, nisi postremam illam quæ ex omnibus malis resurrectione liberabuntur. Describit cœlestem illam hilaritatem potione vini, non tantum quia hujus rei incidit mentio, paulo postquam vinum bibisset; sed quia *bibere vinum* in Scriptura perinde est ac convivari [vid. *Esaiæ*, c. xxii. 13. xxiv. 9.] felicitas vero sub imagine convivii describitur, ut c. viii. 11. Addit *vinum* hoc fore *eternum*, quia apostoli antea nunquam hanc felicitatem gustaverint. Sæpe Christus a rebus corporis ad spirituales transiens eas iisdem verbis exprimit. *Cleric. in Matt. xxvi. 29.*

‡ *Matt. ix. 30. vid. Cleric. Luke xiv. 34. vid. Whistly in loc.*

|| *Luke v. 10. Mark i. 17.*

§ *Matt. xiii. 47.*

he exhorts his disciples to lay out their several talents to the best advantage*. Being among the sheepfolds, he proves himself to be the true shepherd of souls, describing the particulars in which his character exactly answered that of a good shepherd, even so far as to the giving, or laying down his life for the sheep†, i. e. exposing himself to certain death in the protection and defence of his flock from beasts of prey. Among vines, he discourses on the spiritual husbandman and vine-dresser; and draws a parallel between his vineyard, and the natural one‡. At the Sun rising, he says, *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* q. d. The Sun arises to set again in a few hours, and may fall many of you e'er you have finished your journey: but every one that receives and governs himself by my doctrine, shall have a constant and continual guide, sufficient to direct him to eternal life||. Upon the appearance of summer in the trees before him, he points out as evident signs of his approaching kingdom§. At the season of fruits, he puts the Jews in mind, that

* *Matt.* xxv. 27. *Luke* xix. 23, 45.

† *John* x. 11, 15. Or that discourse of Christ's which is here referred to, might be drawn from *Isa.* xl. 11. part of that chapter being the lesson appointed to be read about that time; as *Lamy* gathers with some shew of probability. To which we may add, that the title of *shepherd*, so frequently given by the prophets to *Messiah*, [*Ezek.* xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. *Zech.* xiii. 7. *Pf.* lxxx 1.] was by the Jews applied peculiarly to him. vid. *Allix*, Judgment of Jew. Ch. p. 304. and he applies it to himself accordingly. *Matt.* xxvi. 31. *Mark* xiv. 27. from *Zech.* xiii. 7.

‡ *Matt.* xxvi. 30. *John* xv. 1. See another allusion, in all probability, to a Vine before him, in *Doddridge* on *Job.* xv. 1.

|| Vid. *Doddr.* on *Job.* viii. 12. com. *Wetsten* in *Job.* i. 5. p. 838.

§ *Luke* xxi. 29. *Matt.* xxiv. 32.

that the time was come when some would be expected from them, in return for all the labour that had been bestowed upon them; and intimates the judgement, that would shortly overtake all such among them as were found unprofitable*. When the harvest comes on, he reminds them of the spiritual harvest, or the gathering of his church among men; admonishes them to labour diligently in that work, and add their prayers to Heaven for success†. From their slaves having been lately made free by reason of the sabbatical year, he takes occasion to proclaim a greater and more noble freedom from the slavery of sin, and bondage of corruption‡. And from the *Jewish* ceremony of fetching water on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, in commemoration of the miracle wrought for their fathers in the thirsty wilderness; he introduces an offer of that true *living water*, which should be unto them a well springing up unto everlasting life; the gospel of immortal happiness and salvation; and the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive ||. Upon a report that

* *Matt.* xxi. 33. *Luke* xiii. 6.

† *Matt.* ix. 38. *Luke* x. 2. A like comparison between the season of a spiritual harvest, and some circumstances in the natural one, occurs *Job*. iv. 35, 36. *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth, receiveth wages; and gathereth fruit unto life eternal*, in which words *Jesus* alludes to the number of *Samaritans* coming to him, and who now began to appear in sight. He points towards them, and calls upon the Apostles to behold the agreeable sight, and consider his approaching harvest. *Benson*, *Life of Christ*, p. 123, 386. Comp. *Clarke* in loc.

‡ *John* viii. 32. V. *Newton* on *Daniel* p. 149. Comp. *Whiston* 6 Diff. p. 311.

|| *John* vii. 37, &c. Comp. *John* iv. 10. where the same image is made use of on the like occasion. Vid. *Cleric*. ib. et in v. 14. Et *Lamy*,

that certain Jews were massacred by the Roman governor in the midst of their devotions; and that others had lately met with a no less untimely death by the fall of a tower in *Jerusalem*; he guards his audience against the common vices of pride and censoriousness, in judging such as these to be the greatest sinners, because they were the most eminent sufferers; and exhorts them all to repent of their own crimes, before the divine judgments overtook them; which would shortly fall upon that People, and be the more distinguishable, as coming attended with the very same circumstances*. From the Temple before him, he points† to that of his body; which was most pro-

Lamy, Harm. p. 324. In Job vi. 38. The first of the passages may likewise be considered as a more particular allusion to the lesson for the day. In Sabbato circa hunc novissimum diem tabernaculorum occurrenti legebatur lv. Isaia; quod animadversione dignum est. Sic enim incipit illud caput, Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas, &c. et in eo legimus; querite Dominum dum inveniri potest; inde Dominus materiam differendi sumit; quod verisimile est saepius fecisse, in templo et in synagoga, ubi per singula Sabbata legebantur sacri codices ex ordine. Id. ib. p. 325.

That remarkable expression in administering the sacrament of the last supper, *This is my body*, [*Matt. xxvi. 26.*] is no less evidently allusive to the *Paschal Lamb*, termed the *Lord's Passover*, [*Ex. xii. 11.*] or the *Body of the Passover*, according to the Jewish form of celebrating this feast: [*Maimon. Cham. Umatlah. c. 8. sect. i. et vii.*] as likewise the words, *This is my Blood of the new Covenant*, *ib. 28.* or *The new Covenant in my Blood*, [*Luke xxii. 20.*] are a manifest application of the very terms made use of in the institution of the old covenant. *Ex. xxiv. 8. Comp. Heb. ix. 22.* That in the former instance, *Christ* accommodated himself to each minute circumstance of the Jewish ceremonial, as in taking up the bread with benediction, breaking, distributing it, &c. is shewn by *Ugolinus, Dissert. de Rit. in Cena Dom. ex Antiq. Paschal. illustrat. Thes. Ant. Sacr. Vol. XVII.*

* *Luke xiii. 1-5. οὐτως ἀπολυνθῆτε, thus, in this manner, ye shall perish. Vid. Grotius, Doddridge, Whitby, in loc. Comp. Benson, p. 381, 420.*

† In the like manner I conceive him laying his hand on *Peter*, when he spake these words, *Upon this Rock, &c. Matt. xvi. 18.* as the

properly so called from the divinity residing in him*. From Herod's late rashness in having led his army out to meet the king of Arabia, who came against him with superior forces, and defeated him†; a lesson is laid down to all who entered on the Christian warfare, that they should first well weigh, and carefully compute the difficulties that attended it, before they were engaged in a matter of such consequence‡. From the robberies which were more particularly frequent in that age|| and place§, he forms a beautiful story of a certain traveller, who fell among thieves, was stripped, and wounded, and could find relief from none of his own country or persuasion; but met with it in one of those, from whom he had the least reason to expect any, as being so much used to despise and hate that people, and their way of worship**. From whence he forces his opponent

prophet *Isaiab* probably did to his Son when he said, *before the [or this] Child shall know to refuse the evil, &c.* c. vii. 16. Vid. *Kennicott*, *Serm.* 32. and *Not* 60.

* *John* ii. 19. Thus also when he says, *In my Father's house are many mansions*, some think he alludes to the various apartments in the Temple; and the vast number of persons lodged there.

† *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib.* xix. c. 7. V. *Newton* on *Dan*, p. 149. and *Comp. Whiston*, 6 *Dist.* p. 312.

‡ *Luke* xiv. 31.

§ *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib.* xx. c. 6. Id. B. J. c. 5. & in *Vit.* p. 2, 3.

¶ So many robberies and murders were committed on *this road*, which lay through a kind of wilderness between *Jerusalem* and *Jericho*; that *Jerom* tells us, it was called the *bloody way*, *Dodds*, on *Luke*, x. 30. *Comp. Poli Synops. or Lightsfoot*, *Hor. Heb.* in loc.

** That this notorious enmity between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* was then carried to the greatest height, at least by the former, appears wherever mention is made of the latter. vid. *John* viii. 48. *Luke* ix. 53. *Ecclesi.* i. 25. et *Arnold*, *ibid.* The consequence of such their enmity toward clearing and confirming those points wherein they agreed, is well drawn by *Bossuet*, *Univ. Hist.* p. 406, 417, &c.

nent to approve this amiable instance of humanity, even in the odious character of a *Samaritan*; and thereby shews him incontestably, that the like good office would no less become a *Jew* in the like circumstances*. And from what happened about that time, namely, that those, who obtained the kingdom of *Judea*, went to *Rome* to be confirmed in it; and on their return, called such to account as had been wanting in their duty, and took ample vengeance on those who rebelled against them, (which was the case particularly under *Archelaus*, a few years before our Lord delivered that parable†,) he gives his followers to understand, that after he had ascended into heaven, and taken full possession of his spiritual kingdom; he would come again in power and great glory, and not only punish that rebellious nation of the *Jews*, with exemplary judgments; but at length condemn all those who wilfully opposed his gospel; as well as those who continued to neglect and disregard it‡: Of a piece with these instances was our Saviour's ge-

* *Luke x. 30, &c.* Vid. *Cleric* ib. y. 36. Concerning the *Jewish* interpretation of *Lev. xix. 33.* their limitation of the word *neighbour*, and our Lord's address in avoiding the imputation of directly opposing their established doctrine on that head; see *Lamy Com.* in *Harm.* p. 220. *Prohibitum est eos (Gentiles) a morte liberare, si de morte periclitentur, &c.* (comp. *Lights*, in *Luke x. 29.*) Tam impiam doctrinam si prima fronte impetisset Dominus, clamitasset legis-peritus eum traditionibus doctorum adversari. Verum oculis subiciens exemplum eximie charitatis, quam legis-peritus non poterat non laudare, sic eum confringit, ut teneatur contrariam et saniozem doctrinam suo calculo comprobare. *Comp. Doddr. in Luke x. 33.*

† *Joseph. Ant. Jud. Lib. xviii. c. 14, 15.*

‡ *Luke xix. 12.* Vid. *Cleric.* et *Clarke* in loc. or *Harwood*, *Introd.* to the N. Test. c. 8. § 6.

general method, that whenever men proposed to him any curious question, or related to him any particular fact or event, in expectation of hearing his observations upon it; he constantly turned the matter before him into an occasion of giving some practical instructions to the persons themselves with whom he was conversing*. But I proceed with the general detail of his allusions to things present, which is laid down by an excellent Author, and which though it may look like repeating some of the articles above, yet I trust the insertion of it here will be excused on account of the different applications made, and the variety of uses pointed out. 'In the Spring, our Saviour went into the fields, and sat down on a mountain, and made that discourse which is recorded in St. *Matthew*, and which is full of observations arising from the things which offered themselves to his sight. For when he exhorted his disciples to trust in God, he bade them *behold* the fowls of the air, which were then flying about them, and were fed by Divine Providence, though they did not *sow* nor *reap*, nor *gather into barns*: he bade them take notice of the lilies of the field, which were then blown, and were so beautifully clothed by the same power, and yet toiled not like the husbandmen, who were then at work. Being in a place whence they had a wide prospect of a cultivated land, he bade them observe how God caused the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the fields

* V. *Clarke's* Serm. on *Luke* xiii. 2, 3. where several instances of this kind are produced.

fields and gardens, even of the wicked and ungrateful: and he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images; speaking of good trees, and corrupt trees; of wolves in sheep's clothing; of grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles; of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine; of good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. Speaking at the same time to people, many of whom were fishermen, and lived much upon fish, he says, *What man of you will give his son a serpent, if he ask a fish?* Therefore when he said, in the same discourse, to his disciples, *Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;* it is probable, that he pointed to a city within their view, situated upon the brow of a hill. And when he called them *the salt of the earth*, he alluded perhaps to the husbandmen who were manuring the ground: and when he compared every person who observed his precepts, to a man who built a house upon a rock, which stood firm; and every one who slighted his word, to a man who built a house upon the sand, which was thrown down by the winds and floods: when he used this comparison, 'tis not improbable that he had before his eyes, houses standing upon high ground, and houses in the valley, in a ruinous condition, which had been destroyed by inundations. *Jortin's Discourses*, p. 213, &c. 2d Ed. Comp. *Benson*, p. 396.

Going from *Bethany* to *Jerusalem* with his disciples, as they passed over a mountain, he said, *If ye shall say to this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou*

thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. *Matt. xxi. 21.* When he says, *Luke xxii. 25. The kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors,* he alludes to the vanity of some wicked princes in those times, who deserved the title of robbers, much better than of benefactors, (vid. *Cleric. in loc.*) When the woman of Samaria, *John iv.* wondered that he should ask water of her; he took occasion to represent his doctrine under the image of living-water, or water which flows from a spring. When he was by the sea-shore, *Matt. xiii.* he spake three parables to the people, concerning a sower; because it was then probably seed-time, as others have observed. At the time of the passover, alluding to it, he says, *John v. 24. He that heareth my word, $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\beta\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota$, is passed from death unto life,* (*Grot.*) When he speaks of the fig-tree which had borne no fruit for three years, and was to be cut down if it produced none the next year; he alluded perhaps to the time that he had spent in preaching to the Jews, as well as to their obstinacy, and to the punishment which would follow it, *Luke xiii. Id. ib. in not. p. 216. 2d. Ed.*

Many more instances might be given, where *Christ* has formed his arguments and exhortations on such things as offered themselves to him; applying each most aptly to his present purpose; and where this does not so immediately appear, we have reason to believe it chiefly owing to the omission of some circumstances in the history;

as is observed by a very eminent writer (x) It may be farther observed, that *Christ* is no less easy and intelligible to his auditors by alluding in a familiar way to all their customs, proverbs, maxims, &c. speaking always precisely in the character of a *Jew*, and in exact conformity to what such understood best, and had been most used to; what had been before described or appointed in their sacred books. Thus he takes the very form of his first Sermon on the Mount, from those *blessings* and *cursings* on two mountains, the publishing whereof was enjoined to the *Israelites* upon their entrance into the Holy Land*. The same method he continues to the last, when on the cross he begins to repeat, or as it were, gives out, the 22d Psalm, which so very clearly describes the sufferings and death of the *Messiah*; which prophecy he was at that very time fulfilling, and thereby ascertaining and appropriating this character to himself†.

Hence lastly, we may remark how necessary a careful attention to the particular occasion, time and place; as well as the situation, posture, gesture,

(x) See *Newt.* on *Dan.* p. 148. note *a*, where many of these instances of our Saviour's speaking *pro re nata* are produced. Comp. *Lightfoot*, *Op. Lat.* Vol. I. p. 416. on *Matt.* x. 29. *Luke* xii. 6. — p. 417. *Matt.* x. 9, 10. — p. 468. *John* iv. 35. et Vol. II. p. 45. *Matt.* xxi. 21. — p. 288. *Matt.* v. 24. *Schoetgenii*, *Hor. Heb.* p. 143, in *Matt.* xvi. 18. et *John* vi. 50. Bp. *Hoadley's* *Serm.* on *Matt.* xi. 30. pr.

* (*V. Deut.* xxvii. 28. *Job.* viii.) *Matt.* v. *Luke* vi. 24. the manner of which solemnity has been described at large by some of their writers *V. Lightfoot* on *Matt.* v. 3, 4. *Op. T.* li. p. 20.

† *Matt.* xxvii. 46. *Mark* xv. 34. That a whole Psalm or Song is sometimes referred to by reciting the first words of it, may be gathered from *Exod.* xy. 1, &c. compared with 7, 21. *ib.* see *Pilkington's* *Remarks*, p. 129.

future, &c. in which our Saviour spake, must be in order fully to comprehend the propriety, the force and beauty of his Discourses; which should remind us of the allowances that ought in justice to be made for the seeming uncouthness of some things in them at this day, and make us sensible of the value of those Authors who throw so much light on several passages of Scripture by endeavouring to supply them.

And thus did Christ improve every circumstance into an useful moral; made every object and event serve for a constant monitor, and a remembrancer of his instructions; which by these means must be more easily apprehended and retained, than they could be in any artificial method whatsoever*.

Again, it is observable, that he delivered many things by way of *story*, or *parable*; a most engaging, and a most effectual method of instruction; gradually informing those who in reality were disposed for information, and not too violently disgusting those who were not †. This way of

* See the Author referred to in not. † to *Considerations*, p. 111. Ed. 6. and Add *Cumming's* Serm. on *Matt.* xi. 5. *Scotch Preacher*, V. I. p. 281, &c.

† See *Le Clerc*, Harm. p. 183. The same thing is elegantly described, and well applied by the author of *Dialogues concerning Education*, p. 363, &c. The like may be observed of the many *figurative* expressions, which our Saviour uses upon some occasions. See *Clagett* upon *Job.* iv.

On the same account it was, in all probability that he so generally chose to express himself in the very words of some ancient prophet, more especially in matters that were like to give offence. And to the same purpose it has been observed, that he never spoke in Parables at all, till the *Jews* had manifested such a wicked and perverse spirit, as to ascribe his miracles to a confederacy with *Beelzebub*. *Benson's Life of Christ.* c. 7. § 1, 2. An answer to the pretended obscurity of them may be seen, *ib.* § 3. p. 266, &c.

of teaching is of all others most apt to raise, and to keep up the attention, and set each faculty of the mind on work: it gains the easiest admission into both head and heart; it strikes the deepest; sticks the longest; gives most delight, by leaving something for the hearers themselves to discover; and disoblige least, by putting them upon making their own application. On these accounts it has been admired in all ages, and nations, from the beginning of the world; and was particularly celebrated in the east (^w): "It was the custom of the wise men among the ancients, to cloath their instructions in apt stories and suitable comparisons: such is the parable of *Jotham*, and that very apt one of *Nathan* to *David*: this they did, at once to please, and to instruct; to excite men's attention by gratifying their curiosity; and to quicken their memory by entertaining their fancy. Our Saviour took this method to recommend his weighty instructions, and make them sink deeper into the minds of his auditors. The same method was likewise very proper for another purpose, *viz.* to deliver the mysteries of the gospel with some degree of obscurity and reserve; which he did, both to excite men's industry in searching further into the deep things of God, and withal to punish the sloth and negligence of those, who grudge taking any pains to learn God's will, and their own duty. This reason, you may find, our Saviour himself assigns, why he spake to the multitude in parables,

(^w) *Jerom.* on *Matt.* xiv. *Whitby* on *Matt.* xiii. 10. *Nichols's Conf.* Vol. I.

parables, *Matt.* xiii. 10, &c *.” Among many other excellent uses to which Christ applied this method; in a manner the most delicate and masterly, it was peculiarly fitted to insinuate such points, as more immediately opposed the prejudices, or the inclinations, of all those to whom Christ preached; and which, though necessary for them to be apprised of, so far as might help afterwards to reconcile their thoughts to these things, when they were able to recollect that they had been intended, and foretold from the beginning; yet were not at that time to be laid down in a more open, direct manner: such as related chiefly to the external circumstances of his person and doctrine; and the effects thereof, upon both *Jew* and *Gentile*†.

As to the fundamental parts of his religion, and his manner of declaring them; both these were easy and obvious, such as the weakest and most ignorant (unless affectedly so) could not mistake; and proposed in that plain, popular way to which they were most accustomed, and in which they would be most likely to apprehend him: The *Eastern* writings are well known to abound in general, with brief maxims; parabolic or proverbial expressions; and extremely popular forms of speech‡: In which such a low, dry, minute, way of reasoning and discoursing; such a dull, tedious

* *Louisb.* Dir. p. 185. Comp. *Jaquelot de la verité*, &c. p. 318. *Lamy Harm.* 248-253. *Lightfoot* in *Matt.* xiii. 3. or *Harm.* c. 31. § 37.

† *Vid.* *Jaquelot*, p. 319, &c.

‡ *Vid.* *Affize Serm.* at *Carlisle*, on *Matt.* v. 40.

tedious detail of circumstances and restraining clauses, as is in use with us, would have been little relished or regarded; and which style of theirs might be easily justified in point of certainty and perspicuity; since to one who is tolerably well acquainted with it, the main drift lies commonly very obvious under all these strong and significant, however highly figurative, and bold expressions. Nor is there any great difficulty in supplying all the proper qualifications, which of course arise in every subject; and will have an allowance made for them, so long as either common sense, or common equity and candour is admitted; since in such writings there is never any particular *stress* placed in words, to the prejudice or exclusion of it; as is perhaps too much the case in most of our modern *law forms*; where a long train of circumlocutions is very apt to cloud and stifle, rather than clear and ascertain the sense; and which, by shewing that so great a weight is laid upon the terms, instead of avoiding, usually tend to make a multitude of difficulties. And it is worth remarking, that wherever Christ's words seem capable of different senses, we may with certainty conclude, that to be the true one, which lay most level to the comprehension of his auditors; allowing for those figurative expressions, which were so very frequent and familiar with them; and which therefore are no exceptions to this general rule, this necessary *canon of interpretation*, which of all others, I think, wants most to be recommended.

The

The bulk of his doctrine was of a practical nature, always pertinent to the case in hand, and of an immediate and apparent tendency to the most beneficial purposes: and he is so far from seeking reputation by an artful and elaborate manner of explaining it; that he seems barely to propose each point, together with its proper sanction, and leaves it to shine forth by its own light. 'Tis neither versed in any nice, subtle speculations, nor involved in pompous paradoxes, nor adorned with flowers of rhetoric. We find it free from all ostentatious and unnatural flights, as well as from that load of superstitious rites, and slavish ceremonies, which encumbered every other system: consisting of solid and substantial duties; containing general, comprehensive rules to try them by; and grounded on such never-failing principles of action, as must quickly enable his disciples to determine for themselves, and judge aright in each particular case: as for instance, in that of the *Sabbath*; which, like all other solemnities, was instituted for the sake of man; and therefore should be made subservient to his good*; and in that, to the glory of his Maker, which are inseparable from each other. In *meats* and *drinks*, and every thing, by consequence, of the same kind†; which, as being merely external things, must likewise be of an indifferent nature; and therefore could not of themselves *defile a man*‡.

In

* *Mark* ii. 27. *Vid. Cleric.*

† *Col.* ii. 21.

‡ *Matt.* xv. 18. *Mark* vii. 15. See *Lightf. Harm.* p. 237.

In that of *oaths*, the several kinds whereof were really of the same import, as including the same virtual appeal to God; and therefore must needs be of equal force, and should alike exclude all fraudulent, evasive artifices*. In that of *vows*, which bind only to things otherwise innocent at least, and by which none ever could exempt themselves from duties of a prior, and perpetual obligation†. In that of *contracts*, more especially the great, general one of matrimony, which ought not to be rashly violated by either party, or dissolved for any cause less than such an one as proves inconsistent with the very foundation and original end thereof, v. g. fornication or adultery‡: and by that universal rule, of *mercy* being preferable to *sacrifice*, whenever a *moral* and a *positive* precept interfere with one another§.

Such doctrine must appear, not only excellent in itself, and taken independently; but more especially so, in the circumstances under which it was delivered: as fully obviating the several false maxims, and fallacious glosses, advanced by the *Jewish* teachers of our Saviour's time: in which respect it must be doubly useful, as an instruction in truths of the last importance; and a guard against so many popular errors; and may be considered as another instance of his exquisite manner

* *Matt.* xxiii. 16, &c.

† *Matt.* xv. 6. *Mark* vii. 11.

‡ *Matt.* v. 32, &c. compared with *1 Cor.* vii. 15. and *Wolfe* ib. Vol. III. p. 407. That this should be understood rather as a capital instance, than as the sole restraining clause of divorce, *Vid. Kyrie*, *Obs. Sacr.* Vol. I. p. 25. *Paul* in loc. p. 166, 167. or *Whitby* on *1 Cor.* vii. 15.

§ *Matt.* ix. 13. xii. 7.

ner of accommodating things, both to the general benefit of mankind, and the particular exigences of his hearers.

Lastly, our Saviour's way of arguing, must carry something of a peculiar force and poignancy along with it, and be attended with extraordinary degrees both of conviction, and astonishment; as he knew thoroughly *what was in man*, and therefore could speak to his heart directly*; and *needed not that any man should* either ask him, or inform him of any thing: as he saw into the most secret thoughts, and purposes, of all those whom he had to deal with; and often shewed them plainly that he did so, by removing the latent prejudices of his weaker friends, and obviating their several doubts and difficulties, as they arose in their own minds; before they durst give utterance to them†: by answering such objections as had been made only in private, or at least out of his hearing‡: by refuting every plausible pretence, and laying open the most artful stratagems of his inveterate enemies; detecting their hypocrisy, exposing their true aim; and thereby cutting off all possibility of reply: on which

* *Matt.* ix. 4. xii. 25. *Mark* ii. 8. ix. 33, 34, 35. *Luke* v. 22. vi. 8. ix. 47. xi. 17. *John* vi. 61, 70. xvi. 6. 30. See other instances in *Clagett* on *John* vii. 33, 34. *Lamy*, *Harm.* on *John* v. 14. p. 272. *Benson*, *Life of Christ*, c. 5. sect. ii. iii. And *Lightf.* on *John* i. 48. — *Harm.* p. 535.

† *Comp.* *John* xvi. 19, 30. et *Cleric.* in *John* xi. 22.

‡ This seems to have been the case in *John* vii. 15, 16. — xxvii. 28. and many other places, where that circumstance is not expressed. *Comp.* *Luke* xxii. 61. See *Benson's* *Life of Christ*, c. 5. § iv. and § x. xi. where several Texts are explained by the consideration of Jesus, his knowing the hearts of men, and that he could talk to their thoughts as we do to each other's words or actions. *Comp.* *Dr. Harwood's* new *Introd.* to the N. T. c. 8. § 1. where many ingenious observations occur to the same purpose,

which account his word must needs be *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.*— In this respect too it might well be said, *never man spake like this man.* Many instances whereof will occur upon a diligent perusal of the gospels.

Thus did *Christ* live, and teach: shewing himself as much superior to the rest of the world in each of these respects, as he did in his miracles.

There was an extraordinary man among the *Greeks*, who has often been compared to *Christ*, there being a great resemblance between them, in some very remarkable particulars. *Socrates*, like *Christ*, lays out all his time in going about to admonish and reform his countrymen; which, he assures them, was a *ministry enjoined* him by the Deity, for their benefit; to whom he supposes himself *given*, or *sent* by God; with the utmost firmness bearing all the injuries, and despising the affronts, to which he was continually exposed on that account. He constantly resorts to places of public concourse, and generally grounds his discourses on what occurs there; making use of every place, and season, and occasion, to exercise and inculcate his philosophy. He chooses a state of poverty, to clear himself from all suspicion of private interest, and make his character more unexceptionable, by shewing that he himself practised what he taught*: he avoids meddling with the affairs of the public; declines posts of authority amongst his fellow citizens; as these in such bad times, must

* Vid. *Plutarch. Advers. Colet. Op. Vol. H.*

must have precipitated his fate, before he had done them any considerable service. He perseveres in sifting and examining their prejudices, in order to detect their ignorance and presumption*, and to mortify their pride, on all occasions; and declares that he must persevere in the same course†, even when he clearly foresaw that the loss of his life would certainly attend it‡: nay, that he would continue this course, though he were to die ever so often for it. When merely out of *envy* he is delivered up to his enemies, and on a most malicious prosecution brought to his trial; instead of having recourse to the usual way of supplication, and applying to the passions of his judges; he proves to them, that they ought not to admit of any such application; he informs their reason, and appeals to their consciences; and proceeds only so far in his own defence, as would be just sufficient to assert his *innocence*, and shew them the great *sin* of persecuting and oppressing it. Instead of using or permitting any other means to avoid his death, he signifies that it was free and voluntary in him, because it was become necessary for the world; and meets the instruments thereof with the utmost calmness and serenity.

He left none of his philosophy in writing, but took good care, as he said, to imprint it deeply in the hearts of his disciples; which some of them delivered down to us; [though in a manner very different from that simplicity, and strict pro-

* *Plat. Apol. sect. 9.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Xenoph. Mem. Lib. iv. fin.*

propriety, with which the gospels are recorded] and, indeed, the effects which his instructions, and example, had upon them, were prodigious*.

Some other circumstances might be pointed out, were we to draw a parallel between these two, considered as publick teachers. But notwithstanding any such, and without derogating from the character of *Socrates*; we still may affirm, that he was far surpassed by CHRIST; as well in the importance of the doctrines taught, as in the candid, clear, convincing manner of delivering them; and in that purity, and general perfection, which distinguish Christianity from every other system.

Socrates descends sometimes to trivial subjects; and often trifles in pursuing others; neither attempting to give his hearers information in them; nor so much as pretending to have received any himself: he wraps up his discourse in subtle intricacies, as best adapted to his principal design of shewing men that they knew nothing: disputes *pro* and *con*†, puzzling and perplexing those with whom he argues; and seems more studious to confute what they maintain, than to establish any doctrine of his own: instead of clearing up their doubts, and opening his mind to them; he constantly makes use of captious interrogatories, to ensnare and draw them into difficulties; and is ever mixing ridicule and satire with his reasonings; which though it suited but too well

* Vid. *Charpentier, Life of Socr.*

† Vid. *Cic. de Or. III. 18.*

well with the general turn and temper of that lively people; though it afforded great delight to several of his followers; and served to attach them the more strongly to him: yet it was surely gratifying a wrong taste in them, and giving much unnecessary offence to others (B.) — But that was *Socrates's* talent: and his employing it so much, has given just occasion for that charge of vanity, which some have brought against him.

His *method* of disputing, however admired by his contemporaries, and celebrated by most others since, yet must be owned to admit of many sophisms; to be calculated rather for confounding, than convincing an opponent.

His *genius*, or *dæmon*, whatever he understood by it, though upon some occasions it should be allowed to guard him and his followers, from evils of some consequence; yet on others, it seems to interest itself in very low affairs, and which were hardly *Deo digna*; such, as its giving them warning not to go through a certain street, in which they were to meet some swine, and spoil their cloaths*: in matters of the greatest importance

(B) Of this kind seem to be the sneers on *Anytus*, about his being obliged to maintain himself by privately working at the trade of a leather-dresser, which he had not a mind to own; which had made that same *Anytus* become one of *Socrates's* most bitter enemies: and his persisting in reproaching the pride of *Anytus* on that head, after notice given him that the action should be withdrawn, if he would but forbear the mentioning it; was perhaps a chief cause of the prosecution being carried on with so much pique and violence against him. See *Stanley*, Hist. Ph. Part ii. p. 31, 33. 1st Ed. I cannot therefore quite approve of his *irony*, in this and many other instances, notwithstanding *Le Clerc's* plausible defence of it. *Silv. Phil.* c. 3. sect. 2. p. 181, 192.

* *Plut.*, de Gen. Socr. See a like instance about *Crito's Eye*, in *Cic.* de

ance it leaves him under the highest uncertainty; sometimes it seems to degenerate into downright fanaticism; and, after all, perhaps, was merely fancy, or fiction *.

Socrates was very far from opposing either the superstitious principles, or practices of the *Athenians* with that freedom and simplicity, that openness and zeal, with which *Christ* taxed those of the *Jews*: on the contrary, he always conforms, and gives countenance to them. Nor does he declare against their most predominant, and not irreputable vices; but rather, it must be owned, often goes very grossly into the language of them; unless we admit the favourable apology made for him on this article, by throwing the whole blame on one of his disciples. He appears publicly to plead his own acknowledgment of their divinities, and approbation of their established worship † both which were abominable; and often treated accordingly upon the stage; and which therefore no such excuse, as that of avoiding to disturb the publick peace, or not offending the weak minds of the people ‡, or obviating persecution;

de Div. i. 54. In what sense could the late author of his life understand this *divine call*, when he supposes it to extend to *indifferent affairs*? p. 90.

* *Ouzel*, Animadv. in *Min. Fel.* p. 154. Though so much deference is due to the authorities produced on the other side by a learned friend, that they must be referred to, See *Jortin's Remarks* on *Ecel. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 95.

† Vid. *Plat. et Xen. Apol. comp. Rollin*, A. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 260. Quis jam superstitiones *Aegyptiorum* audeat reprehendere, quas *Socrates Athenis* auctoritate confirmavit suâ? *Lactant. de Falsa Sap. Lib. iii.* 10. comp. *Xen. Mem. Socr.* 1.

‡ *Cooper's Life of Socrates*, p. 166.

cution; ever can justify. He performs his devotion to the same deities in private*; and in his last moments, either betrays an apprehension of some neglect towards one of them; or contents himself with continuing the same strain of ironical humour in respect to them, which he indulged in other subjects; or left the world uncertain what he meant.

From these slight strictures on a character justly reputed one of the most complete among mere men; when it is placed in opposition to that of *Christ* our Lord, 'tis easy to distinguish which has the advantage †; as is freely owned by some modern unbelievers ‡. The same thing would appear more clearly, were the latter to be drawn out at large, and shewn together with any other of the most celebrated lawgivers, and publick teachers. But such a comparative view seems to be little necessary to its illustration.

And I content myself with only touching on some few of those remarkable circumstances in the life of J E S U S, which were recorded by his first disciples, as the evidences of his being the *Son of God*; which brought so many to believe on him at

* *Plat. Phæd.* § 4. et in *fin. Theæst.* Or. 14. *D. Laert. Lib. ii.* 42. So far was he from being a martyr to the unity of the divine nature, as is generally asserted. Concerning which see *Le Clerc's Silo. Philol.* to *Æsch. Socrat.* c. 3. p. 177. and *Cudworth, Int. Syst. Lib. i.* c. 4. § 23. N. 8. p. 482. *Mossæm.*

† This may be seen at large in *Marquise's Truth of the Gospel History.*

‡ See the parallel in *Rousseau's Treatise on Education*, and *Voltaire's Essay on Toleration*, c. 14.

at that time, and which one would think sufficient to produce the same belief in every age; as they have actually done, both with the generality, where-ever they have been fairly offered to them; and with the best, and wisest men, who have given themselves leave duly to reflect upon them.

The following Observations upon the Character and Example of Christ, by the Author of the Appendix, may be read as a Summary of what has been delivered in the preceding Treatise.

IN the first place, Christ was absolutely innocent: we do not find a single vice to which he was addicted, either from the accounts of his own followers, or as charged upon him by his enemies: We hear nothing like what is told of *Mahomet*, of his wives and concubines; nothing of his falling, like *Socrates* and *Plato*, into the fashionable vices of his country. — In the next place, his whole life, that part of it at least, which we are acquainted with, was employed in doing good, in substantial acts of kindness and compassion to all those who fell in his way, i. e. in solid virtue. In his youth he set an example of subjection and obedience to his parents. *Luke* ii. 51.

By

By his presence of mind and judicious replies, whenever ensnaring questions were proposed to him, he testified the coolness and soundness of his understanding, *Matt.* xxi. 24. xxii. 16. xxx. 37.— By avoiding all danger when he could do it consistently with his duty, and resolutely encountering the greatest, *when his hour was come*, i. e. when his own office or the destination of providence made it necessary, he proved the sedateness of his courage in opposition to that which is produced by passion and enthusiasm. *Matt.* xii. 14, 15. xiv. 12, 13. *John* iv. 1—3. Compared with *Matt.* xv. 17—19. — by his patience and forbearance, when he had the means of revenge in his power, he taught us the proper treatment of our enemies, *Luke* ix. 54. *Matt.* xxvi. 53. compared with *Luke* xxiii. 34. — by his withdrawing himself from the populace and repelling their attempts to make him a King, he shewed us the sense we ought to entertain of popular clamour and applause, *John* vi. 15. — by his laying hold of every opportunity to instruct his followers, and taking so much pains to inculcate his precepts, he left us a pattern of industry and zeal in our profession; — by the liberty he took with the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, the Lawyers and Scribes, in exposing their hypocrisy, their errors and corruptions, he taught us fortitude in the discharge of our duty, *Matt.* xxiii. *Luke* xi. 54. — he spared neither the faults of his friends, nor the vices of his enemies; — by his indifference and unconcern about his own accommodation and appearance, the interests of his family and fortune,

fortune, he condemned all worldly mindedness, *Matt.* viii. 20. xii. 46—50. *John* iv. 34.—He was perfectly sober and rational in his devotions, as witness the Lord's prayer compared with any of the compositions of modern enthusiasts.—his admirable discourses before his death are specimens of inimitable tenderness and affection towards his followers. *John* xiv. xv. xvi. xvii.—his quiet submission to death, though even the prospect of it was terrible to him, exhibits a complete pattern of resignation and acquiescence in the divine will, *John* xxii. 41-44.

And to crown all, his example was *practicable*, and suited to the condition of human life;—he did not like *Rousseau* call upon mankind to return back into a state of nature, or calculate his precepts for such a state.—He did not with the Monk and the Hermit run into Caves and Cloisters, or suppose men could make themselves more acceptable to God by keeping out of the way of one another. He did not, with some of the most eminent of the *Stoics*, command his followers to throw their wealth into the Sea, nor with the eastern *Faquirs* to inflict upon themselves any tedious gloomy penances, or extravagant mortifications.—He did not, what is the sure companion of enthusiasm, affect singularity in his behaviour; he dressed, he ate, he conversed like other people; he accepted their invitations, was a guest at their feasts, frequented their synagogues, and went up to *Jerusalem* at their great Festival. He supposed his disciples to follow some professions,

to

to be soldiers, tax-gatherers, fishermen; to marry wives, pay taxes, submit to magistrates, — to carry on their usual business; and when they could be spared from his service, to return again to their respective callings*. — Upon the whole, if the account which is given of *Christ* in Scripture be a just one, — If there was really such a person, how could he be an impostor? — if there was no such person, how came the illiterate Evangelists to hit off such a Character, and that without any visible design of drawing any Character at all?

The like did his forerunner *John* the Baptist. When the publicans and soldiers, people of the two most obnoxious professions in that age and country, asked *John* what they were to do, *John* does not require them to quit their occupations, but to beware of the vices and perform the duties of them; which also is to be understood as the Baptist's own explanation of that *μετανοια εις αφεση αμαρτιων* to which he called his countrymen.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X.

THE MORALITY OF THE GOSPEL

NOT beyond what might be discovered by reason; nor possibly could be; because all morality being founded in relations and consequences, which we are acquainted with, and experience, must depend upon reasons intelligible to our apprehensions, and discoverable by us.

Nor perhaps, except in a few instances, was it beyond what might have been collected from the scattered precepts of different Philosophers.

Indeed to have put together all the wise and good precepts of all the different Philosophers, to have separated and laid aside all the error, immorality and superstition that was mixed with them, would have proved a very difficult work: but that a single person, without any assistance from those Philosophers, or any human learning whatsoever, in direct opposition also to the established practices and maxims of his own country, should form a system, so unblameable on the one hand, and so perfect on the other, is extraordinary, beyond example and belief; and yet must be believed by those who hold *Christ* to have been either an *impostor* or *enthusiast*.

The

The following are some principal Articles of his system.

I. *The forgiveness of injuries and enemies*,—absolutely original.

—“Ye have heard that it hath been said thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” *Matt. v. 43-45.*

“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.” *Matt. vi. 14, 15.*

“Then came *Peter* unto him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? *Jesus* saith unto him, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven: therefore (*i. e. in this respect*) is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants; and when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents; but, for as much as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made: the servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then

the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me what thou owest; and his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all; and he would not, but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me, shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him; so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." *Matt. xviii. 21-35.*

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses." *Mark xi. 25.*

"Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest, for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." *Luke vi. 35.*

And

"And when they were come to the place, which is called *Calvary*, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left: then said *Jesus*, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." *Luke* xxiii. 34.

II. *The universality of benevolence without distinction of country or religion.*

"They went, and entered into a village of the *Samaritans* to make ready for him, and they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to *Jerusalem*; and when his disciples *James* and *John* saw this, they said, lord wilt thou, that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as *Elias* did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." *Luke* ix. 52-53.

"*The Jewish Lawyer*, willing to justify himself, said unto *Jesus*, and who is my neighbour? And *Jesus* answering said, A certain man went down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed leaving him half dead; and by chance there came down a certain *priest* that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side; And likewise a *Levite*, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side; but a certain *Samaritan* as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and

and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him; and on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the Host, and, said, take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee: which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise." *Luke x. 29-37.*

III. *The inferiority and subordination of the ceremonial to the moral Law.*

"Leave thy gift before the altar; and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." *Matt. v. 23.*

If ye had known what this meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," ye would not have condemned the guiltless. *Matt. xii. 7.*

"And behold there was a man which had his hand withered; and they asked him, saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, what man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." *Matt. xii. 10-13.* See also *Mark iii. 1-5.*

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man — those things, which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the

heart, and they defile the man ; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies, these are the things which defile a man ; but to eat with unwashen hands, defileth not a man."

Matt. xv. 11-18-20.

"Woe unto you *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, hypocrites, for ye pay tythe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith, (*fidelity* :) these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone."

"Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind *Pharisee*, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." *Matt. xxiii.*

23. 25.

"And the Scribe said unto him, well master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but he, and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices : and when *Jesus* saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

Mark xii. 32-34.

IV. *The condemning of spiritual pride and ostentation.*

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them ; otherwise ye shall have

no

no reward of your Father which is in heaven : therefore when thou doſt thine alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the ſynagogues and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men ; verily I ſay unto you they have their reward, But when thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in ſecret ; and thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly. And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are ; for they love to pray, ſtanding in the ſynagogues and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men ; verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and, when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret ; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly. Moreover when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance ; for they diſfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt ; verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward : but thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head and waſh thy face, that thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret ; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly." *Matt. vi. 1-6. 16-18.*

" All their works they do for to be ſeen of men : they make broad their Phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be

be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi." *Matt. xxiii. 5-7.*

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a *Pharisee*, and the other a *Publican*; the *Pharisee* stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this *Publican*; I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess. And the *Publican* standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you this man went down to his house, justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." *Luke xviii. 9-14.*

V. Restraining the licentiousness of Divorces.

"The *Pharisees* came unto him tempting him, and saying unto him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh; what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, why did *Moses* then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, *Moses* because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you
to

to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so; and I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." *Matt. xix. 3-9.*

N. B. These four last articles were in direct opposition to the established practice and opinions of our Saviour's own country.

VI. *The separation of civil authority from religious matters.*

"Then saith he unto them, Render unto *Cæsar* the things which are *Cæsar's*, and unto God the things that are God's." *Matt. xxii. 21.*

"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" *Luke xii. 13, 14.*

He said unto the woman (*caught in adultery*) "Where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (i. e. *judicially; for the woman's answer was not true in any other sense.*) she said, No man Lord: and Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee (i. e. *in the same sense, or as a judge.*)" *John viii. 10, 11.*

VII. *Purity and simplicity of divine worship.*

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him: after this manner

manner therefore pray ye, *Our Father*, &c. *Matt. vi. 7-9.*

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in truth.”

John iv. 23, 24.

VIII. *Estimating of actions by the intent and not the effect.*

“And Jesus sat over against the treasury (*i. e. for pious uses,*) and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much; and there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing; and he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury, for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

Mark xii. 41-44.

IX. *Extending of morality to the regulation of the thoughts.*

“I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” *Matt. 5. 28.*

“Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c., —these are the things which defile a man.” *Matt. xv. 19, 20.*

X. *The demand of duty from mankind proportioned to their ability and opportunities.*

“That

“That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes: for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and (*i. e. as*) to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” *Luke* xii. 47, 48.

XI. *The invitations to repentance.*

“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him; and the *Pharisees* and *Scribes* murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them; and he spake this parable unto them, saying, what man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost till he find it? and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” *Luke* xv. 1-7.

“And he said, (*i. e. upon the same occasion,*) A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; and he divided unto them his living: and not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his

journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living; and when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want; and he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine, and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him; and when he came unto himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him: and the son said unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: but the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found." *Luke xv. 1--24.*



The gospel maxims of *loving our neighbour as ourselves, and doing as we would be done by*, are much superior rules of life to the *το ωφελεον* of the Greek, or the *honestum* of the Latin moralists, in forming ideas of which people put in or left out just what they pleased; and better than the *utile*, or *general expediency* of the modern, which few can estimate—as motives likewise, or principles of action, they are much safer than either *the love of our country*, which has oft times been destructive to the rest of the world; or *friendship*, the almost constant source of partiality and injustice.

His manner also of teaching, was infinitely more affecting than theirs: as may be known by comparing what we feel, when we rise up from reading the parables of the good Samaritan, of the Pharisee and Publican, the servant who when he was forgiven by his master, would not forgive his fellow servant, the prodigal son, the rich man who laid up his stores, *Luke xii.* by comparing, I say, these with any thing excited in us, on reading *Tully's Offices*, *Aristotle's Ethics*, or *Seneca's Moral Dissertations*.

No heathen moralist ever opposed himself, as Christ did, to the prevailing vices and corruptions of his own time and country. *Matt. v. vi, vii. xxiii. Luke xi. 39-44.*—The sports of the gladiators, unnatural lust, the licentiousness of divorce, the exposing of infants and slaves, procuring abortions, publick establishment of stews, all subsisted at Rome, and not one of them condemned or hinted

hinted at in *Tully's Offices*.—The most indecent revelling, drunkenness and lewdness, practised at the feasts of *Bacchus*, *Ceres* and *Cybele*, and their greatest Philosophers never remonstrated against it.

The heathen Philosophers, though they have advanced fine sayings and sublime precepts in some points of morality, have grossly failed in others; such as the toleration or encouragement of revenge, slavery, unnatural lust, fornication, suicide, &c. e. g.

Plato expressly allowed of excessive drinking at the festival of *Bacchus*.

Maximus Tyrius forbid to pray.

Socrates directs his hearers to consider the *Greeks* as brethren, but Barbarians as natural enemies.

Aristotle maintained that nature intended Barbarians to be slaves.

The *Stoics* held that all crimes were equal.

Plato,
Cicero,
Epicetus, } All allow and advise men to continue the idolatry of their ancestors.

Aristotle,
Cicero, } Both speak of the forgiveness of injuries, as meanness and pusillanimity.

These were trifles to what follows.

*Aristotle** and *Plato*, both direct that means should be used to prevent weak children being brought up.

Cato commends a young man for frequenting the stews.

Cicero

* V. Dr. *Priestly's Institutes of Nat. and Rev. Religion*, Vol. 2nd sect. 2, 3.

Cicero expressly speaks of fornication as a thing never found fault with.

Plato recommends a community of women; also advises that soldiers should not be restrained from sensual indulgence, even the most unnatural species of it.

Xenophon relates without any marks of reprobation, that unnatural lust was encouraged by the laws of several *Græcian* states.

Solon their great lawgiver forbid it only to slaves.

Diogenes inculcated, and openly practised the most brutal lust.

Zeno the founder, and *Cato* the ornament of the *Stoic* philosophy, both killed themselves.

Lastly, the idea which the Christian scriptures exhibit of the Deity, is in many respects different from the notion that was then entertained of him, but perfectly consonant to the best information we have of his nature and attributes from reason and the appearances of the universe—The scriptures describe him as one, wise, powerful, spiritual and omnipresent; as placable and impartial, as abounding in affection towards his creatures, overruling by his providence the concerns of mankind in this world, and designing to compensate their sufferings, reward their merit, and punish their crimes in another. The foregoing instructions both with regard to God and to morality, appear also without any traces of either learning or study. No set proofs, no formal arguments, no regular deduction or investigation, by which such conclusions

sions could be derived:—the very different state likewise of learning and enquiry in *Judea* and other countries—and the vast superiority of this to any other system of religion:—all these circumstances shew that the authors of it must have some sources of information which the others had not.